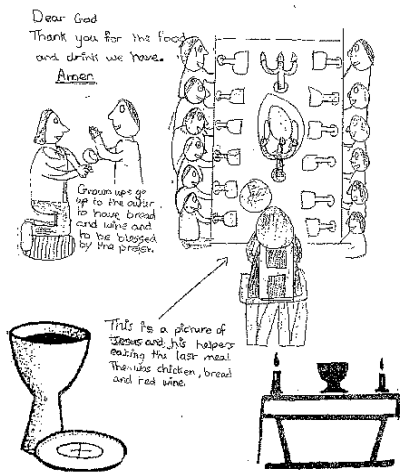


# A Celebration for Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time



## Sentence

The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted. (Matthew 23:11-12)

## Opening Prayer or Collect Year A

Creator God,  
you have filled the world with beauty:

open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works,  
that, rejoicing in your whole creation,  
we may learn to serve you with gladness,  
for the sake of him through whom all things were made;  
your son Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## Readings for the Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

### **Old Testament: Joshua 3:7-17**

*A Reading from Joshua, Chapter 3 beginning at verse 7*

The Lord said to Joshua, 'This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so that they may know that I will be with you as I was with Moses. You are the one who shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, "When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan."' Joshua then said to the Israelites, 'Draw near and hear the words of the Lord your God.' Joshua said, 'By this you shall know that among you is the living God who without fail will drive out from before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites: the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is going to pass before you into the Jordan. So now select twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. When the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan flowing from above shall be cut off; they shall stand in a single heap.'

When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan, the priests bearing the ark of the covenant were in front of the people. Now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest. So when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the edge of the water, the waters flowing from above stood still, rising up in a single heap far off at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, while those flowing towards the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea, were wholly cut off. Then the people crossed over opposite Jericho. While all Israel were crossing over on dry ground, the priests who bore the

ark of the covenant of the Lord stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, until the entire nation finished crossing over the Jordan.

Hear the Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

***Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37 APBA p 337***

- 1 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good:  
for his loving mercy is for ever.
- 2 Let the Lord's redeemed say so:  
whom he has redeemed from the hand of the enemy,
- 3 And gathered in from every land  
from the east and from the west:  
from the north and from the south.
- 4 Some went astray in the wilderness and in the desert:  
and found no path to an inhabited city;
- 5 They were hungry and thirsty:  
and their heart fainted within them.
- 6 Then they cried to the Lord in their distress:  
and he took them out of their trouble.
- 7 He led them by the right path:  
till they came to an inhabited city.
- 33 He turns the rivers into desert:  
and springs of water into thirsty ground.
- 34 He makes of a fruitful land a salty waste:  
because its inhabitants are evil.
- 35 He turns the wilderness into a pool of water:  
and parched ground into flowing springs
- 36 And there he settles the hungry:  
and they build a city to live in.
- 37 They sow fields and plant vineyards:  
which give them fruitful harvest.

***New Testament: 1 Thessalonians 3:5-13***

*A Reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians, Chapter 2 beginning at verse 1*

For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labour had been in vain.

But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love. He has told us also that you always remember us kindly and long to see us—just as we long to see you. For this reason, brothers and sisters, during all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your faith. For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?

Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Hear the Word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

**OR**

***New Testament: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8***

*A Reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians, Chapter 4 beginning at verse 1*

Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God (as, in fact, you are doing), you should do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; that each one of you knows how to control your own body in holiness and honour, not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one wrongs or exploits a brother or sister in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, just as we have already told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness. Therefore whoever rejects this rejects not human authority but God, who also gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Hear the Word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

***Gospel: Matthew 23:1-12, (37-39)***

*A Reading from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew, Chapter 23, beginning at verse 1*

**Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ**

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practise what they teach. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. They love to have the place of honour at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have people call them rabbi. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

*‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you, desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.”’*

For the Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**